

Assembly Bill No. 1344

CHAPTER 692

An act to amend Sections 9255 and 9260 of the Elections Code, and to amend Sections 34457, 34458, 54954.2, and 54956 of, to add Section 34458.5 to, to add Article 2.6 (commencing with Section 53243) to Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 of, and to add Chapter 10.1 (commencing with Section 3511.1) to Division 4 of Title 1 of, the Government Code, relating to local government.

[Approved by Governor October 9, 2011. Filed with
Secretary of State October 9, 2011.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1344, Feuer. Local governance.

(1) Existing law requires a charter commission to submit, among other things, a city charter to the voters of a city at either a special election called for that purpose, at any established municipal election date, or at any established election date, provided that there are at least 88 days before the election. Existing law also authorizes the governing body of any city or city and county to, among other things, propose a charter and submit the proposal for the adoption to the voters at either a special election called for that purpose or at any established municipal election date or at any established election date, provided there are at least 88 days before the election.

This bill would require a city charter or charter amendment, whether submitted to the voters by a charter commission or the governing body of the city or city and county, to be submitted at the next established statewide general, statewide primary, or regularly scheduled municipal election date, provided there are at least 95 days before the election. This bill would also require a proposal to adopt a charter, whether submitted to the voters by a charter commission or the legislative body of a city or city and county to include in the ballot description an enumeration of new city powers as a result of the adoption of the charter, including, but not limited to, whether the city council will, pursuant to an adopted charter, have the power to raise its own compensation and the compensation of other city officials without voter approval.

(2) The Meyers-Milias-Brown Act contains various provisions that govern collective bargaining of local represented employees. The Ralph M. Brown Act requires that all meetings of a legislative body of a local agency be open and public and all persons be permitted to attend unless a closed session is authorized. Existing law requires all contracts of employment between an employee and a local agency employer to include a provision which provides that regardless of the term of the contract, if the contract is terminated, the maximum cash settlement that an employee may receive shall be an amount

equal to the monthly salary of the employee multiplied by the number of months left on the unexpired term of the contract, with a maximum of 18 months.

This bill would, on and after January 1, 2012, additionally prohibit an employment contract for a local agency executive, as defined, from providing an automatic renewal of a contract that provides for an automatic compensation increase in excess of a cost-of-living adjustment or a maximum cash settlement in excess of certain limits, as specified. By expanding the duties of local officials, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(3) Existing law sets forth the penalties for misuse of public resources or falsifying expense reporting, including, but not limited to, loss of reimbursement privileges, restitution to the local agency, civil penalties for misuse of public resources, and prosecution for misuse of public resources, including imprisonment for 2, 3, or 4 years, and disqualification from holding office, as specified.

This bill would, on and after January 1, 2012, require a contract executed or renewed between a local agency and an officer or employee of the local agency to include a provision that requires an officer or employee of a local agency who is convicted of a crime involving an abuse of his or her office or position, as defined, to fully reimburse the local agency for specified payments made by that local agency to the officer or employee. The bill would also require an officer or employee of the local agency, who is convicted of a crime involving an abuse of his or her office, to fully reimburse any such payments that are made by the local agency in the absence of a contractual obligation between the agency and the officer or employee.

(4) The Ralph M. Brown Act enables the legislative body of a local agency to call both regular and special meetings. The act requires the legislative body of a local agency to post an agenda containing a brief general description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at a regular meeting, in a location that is freely accessible to members of the public. The act also requires the presiding officer of the legislative body to deliver written notice to each member of the legislative body, and to each local newspaper of general circulation and radio or television station requesting notice in writing if the presiding officer of the legislative body calls a special meeting.

This bill would require the legislative body, or the presiding officer of the legislative body, to provide notice of each meeting, including special meetings, on the local agency's Internet Web site, if the local agency has one, as specified. In addition, this bill would prohibit any legislative body from holding a special meeting regarding the salary, salary schedule, or other form of compensation for any local agency executive.

(5) The bill would express a legislative finding and declaration that, to ensure the statewide integrity of local government, the provisions of the act are an issue of statewide concern and that, therefore, all counties and cities,

including charter counties, charter cities, and charter cities and counties, would be subject to the provisions of the bill.

(6) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 9255 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

9255. (a) A charter or charter amendment proposed by a charter commission, whether elected or appointed by a governing body, for a city or city and county shall be submitted to the voters at an established statewide general, statewide primary, or regularly scheduled municipal election date pursuant to Section 1200, 1201, or 1301, provided that there are at least 95 days before the election. A charter commission may also submit a charter pursuant to Section 34455 of the Government Code.

(b) The following city or city and county charter proposals shall be submitted to the voters at an established statewide general, statewide primary, or regularly scheduled municipal election, pursuant to Section 1200, 1201, or 1301, provided that there are at least 88 days before the election:

(1) An amendment or repeal of a charter proposed by the governing body of a city or a city and county on its own motion.

(2) An amendment or repeal of a city charter proposed by a petition signed by 15 percent of the registered voters of the city.

(3) An amendment or repeal of a city and county charter proposed by a petition signed by 10 percent of the registered voters of the city and county.

(4) A recodification of the charter proposed by the governing body on its own motion, provided that the recodification does not, in any manner, substantially change the provisions of the charter.

(c) Charter proposals by the governing body and charter proposals by petition of the voters may be submitted at the same election.

(d) The total number of registered voters of the city or city and county shall be determined according to the county elections official's last official report of registration to the Secretary of State that was effective at the time the notice required pursuant to Section 9256 was given.

SEC. 2. Section 9260 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

9260. The petition shall be in substantially the following form:

Petition for Submission to Voters of Proposed Amendment to the Charter
of the City (or City and County) of ____

To the city council (or other legislative body) of the City (or City and County) of ____:

We, the undersigned, registered and qualified voters of the State of California, residents of the City (or City and County) of _____, pursuant to Section 3 of Article XI of the California Constitution and Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 34450) of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 4 of the Government Code, present to the city council (or other legislative body) of the city (or city and county) this petition and request that the following proposed amendment to the charter of the city (or city and county) be submitted to the registered and qualified voters of the city (or city and county) for their adoption or rejection at the next statewide general, statewide primary, or regularly scheduled municipal election date pursuant to Section 1200, 1201, or 1301.

The proposed charter amendment reads as follows:

First. (setting forth the text of the amendment) _____ (etc.)

Signature	Printed Name	Residence	Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

SEC. 3. Chapter 10.1 (commencing with Section 3511.1) is added to Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code, to read:

CHAPTER 10.1. LOCAL AGENCY EXECUTIVES

3511.1. As used in this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(a) “Compensation” means annual salary, stipend, or bonus, paid by a local agency employer to a local agency executive.

(b) “Cost-of-living” means the California Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers as calculated by the Department of Industrial Relations.

(c) “Local agency” means a county, city, whether general law or chartered, city and county, town, school district, municipal corporation, district, political subdivision, or any board, commission, or agency thereof, or other local public agency.

(d) “Local agency executive” means any person employed by a local agency who is not subject to the Meyers-Miliias-Brown Act (Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 3500)), Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 45100) of Part 25 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Education Code, or Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 88000) of Part 51 of Division 7 of Title 3 of the Education Code, and who meets either of the following requirements:

(1) The person is the chief executive officer of the local agency.

(2) The person is the head of a department of a local agency.

3511.2. On or after January 1, 2012, any contract executed or renewed between a local agency and a local agency executive shall not provide for the following:

(a) An automatic renewal of a contract that provides for an automatic increase in the level of compensation that exceeds a cost-of-living adjustment.

(b) A maximum cash settlement that exceeds the amounts determined pursuant to Article 3.5 (commencing with Section 53260) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5.

SEC. 4. Section 34457 of the Government Code is amended to read:

34457. After the charter prepared by the charter commission has been filed in the office of the clerk of the governing body of the city or city and county pursuant to Section 34455, the proposed charter shall be submitted to the voters of the city or city and county at the next established statewide general, statewide primary, or regularly scheduled municipal election date pursuant to Section 1200, 1201, or 1301 of the Elections Code, provided there are at least 95 days before the election.

SEC. 5. Section 34458 of the Government Code is amended to read:

34458. (a) As an alternative to the procedure provided for in Sections 34450 to 34457, inclusive, the governing body of any city or city and county, on its own motion may propose or cause to be proposed, amend or cause to be amended, or repeal or cause to be repealed, a charter, and may submit the proposal for the adoption, amendment, or repeal thereof, to the voters at the next established statewide general, statewide primary, or regularly scheduled municipal election date pursuant to Section 1200, 1201, or 1301 of the Elections Code provided there are at least 88 days before the election.

(b) Prior to approving the submission to the voters of a proposal to adopt a charter, the governing body shall hold at least two public hearings on the matter of the proposal of a charter and the content of the proposed charter. Notice of the public hearings shall be given by publication pursuant to Section 6066, in a newspaper designated by the governing body and circulated throughout the city, and by posting the notice in three public places within the jurisdiction at least 21 calendar days prior to the date of each public hearing. The second public hearing shall be held at least 30 days after the first public hearing. At least one of the public hearings shall be held outside of normal business hours to facilitate public participation. The governing body shall not conduct a vote on whether to approve the submission to the voters of the proposal to adopt a charter until 21 days after the second public hearing.

SEC. 6. Section 34458.5 is added to the Government Code, to read:

34458.5. A proposal to adopt or amend a charter, whether submitted to the voters pursuant to Section 34457 or 34458, shall include in the ballot description an enumeration of new city powers as a result of the adoption of the charter, including, but not limited to, whether the city council will, pursuant to an adopted charter, have the power to raise its own compensation and the compensation of other city officials without voter approval.

SEC. 7. Article 2.6 (commencing with Section 53243) is added to Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government Code, to read:

Article 2.6. Abuse of Office

53243. On or after January 1, 2012, any contract executed or renewed between a local agency and an officer or employee of a local agency that provides paid leave salary offered by the local agency to the officer or employee pending an investigation shall require that any salary provided for that purpose be fully reimbursed if the officer or employee is convicted of a crime involving an abuse of his or her office or position.

53243.1. On or after January 1, 2012, any contract executed or renewed between a local agency and an officer or employee of a local agency that provides funds for the legal criminal defense of an officer or employee shall require that any funds provided for that purpose be fully reimbursed to the local agency if the officer or employee is convicted of a crime involving an abuse of his or her office or position.

53243.2. On or after January 1, 2012, any contract of employment between an employee and a local agency employer shall include a provision which provides that, regardless of the term of the contract, if the contract is terminated, any cash settlement related to the termination that an employee may receive from the local agency shall be fully reimbursed to the local agency if the employee is convicted of a crime involving an abuse of his or her office or position.

53243.3. On or after January 1, 2012, if a local agency provides, in the absence of a contractual obligation, for any of the payments described in this article, then the employee or officer receiving any payments provided for those purposes shall fully reimburse the local agency that provided those payments in the event that the employee or officer is convicted of a crime involving the abuse of his or her office or position.

53243.4. For purposes of this article, “abuse of office or position” means either of the following:

(a) An abuse of public authority, including, but not limited to, waste, fraud, and violation of the law under color of authority.

(b) A crime against public justice, including, but not limited to, a crime described in Title 7 (commencing with Section 92) of Part 1 of the Penal Code.

SEC. 8. Section 54954.2 of the Government Code is amended to read:

54954.2. (a) (1) At least 72 hours before a regular meeting, the legislative body of the local agency, or its designee, shall post an agenda containing a brief general description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting, including items to be discussed in closed session. A brief general description of an item generally need not exceed 20 words. The agenda shall specify the time and location of the regular meeting and shall be posted in a location that is freely accessible to members of the public and on the local agency’s Internet Web site, if the local agency has one. If requested, the agenda shall be made available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with a disability, as required by Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12132), and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation

thereof. The agenda shall include information regarding how, to whom, and when a request for disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, may be made by a person with a disability who requires a modification or accommodation in order to participate in the public meeting.

(2) No action or discussion shall be undertaken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except that members of a legislative body or its staff may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by persons exercising their public testimony rights under Section 54954.3. In addition, on their own initiative or in response to questions posed by the public, a member of a legislative body or its staff may ask a question for clarification, make a brief announcement, or make a brief report on his or her own activities. Furthermore, a member of a legislative body, or the body itself, subject to rules or procedures of the legislative body, may provide a reference to staff or other resources for factual information, request staff to report back to the body at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter, or take action to direct staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), the legislative body may take action on items of business not appearing on the posted agenda under any of the conditions stated below. Prior to discussing any item pursuant to this subdivision, the legislative body shall publicly identify the item.

(1) Upon a determination by a majority vote of the legislative body that an emergency situation exists, as defined in Section 54956.5.

(2) Upon a determination by a two-thirds vote of the members of the legislative body present at the meeting, or, if less than two-thirds of the members are present, a unanimous vote of those members present, that there is a need to take immediate action and that the need for action came to the attention of the local agency subsequent to the agenda being posted as specified in subdivision (a).

(3) The item was posted pursuant to subdivision (a) for a prior meeting of the legislative body occurring not more than five calendar days prior to the date action is taken on the item, and at the prior meeting the item was continued to the meeting at which action is being taken.

(c) This section is necessary to implement and reasonably within the scope of paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 3 of Article I of the California Constitution.

(d) For purposes of subdivision (a), the requirement that the agenda be posted on the local agency's Internet Web site, if the local agency has one, shall only apply to a legislative body that meets either of the following standards:

(1) A legislative body as that term is defined by subdivision (a) of Section 54952.

(2) A legislative body as that term is defined by subdivision (b) of Section 54952, if the members of the legislative body are compensated for their appearance, and if one or more of the members of the legislative body are also members of a legislative body as that term is defined by subdivision (a) of Section 54952.

SEC. 9. Section 54956 of the Government Code is amended to read:

54956. (a) A special meeting may be called at any time by the presiding officer of the legislative body of a local agency, or by a majority of the members of the legislative body, by delivering written notice to each member of the legislative body and to each local newspaper of general circulation and radio or television station requesting notice in writing and posting a notice on the local agency's Internet Web site, if the local agency has one. The notice shall be delivered personally or by any other means and shall be received at least 24 hours before the time of the meeting as specified in the notice. The call and notice shall specify the time and place of the special meeting and the business to be transacted or discussed. No other business shall be considered at these meetings by the legislative body. The written notice may be dispensed with as to any member who at or prior to the time the meeting convenes files with the clerk or secretary of the legislative body a written waiver of notice. The waiver may be given by telegram. The written notice may also be dispensed with as to any member who is actually present at the meeting at the time it convenes.

The call and notice shall be posted at least 24 hours prior to the special meeting in a location that is freely accessible to members of the public.

(b) Notwithstanding any other law, a legislative body shall not call a special meeting regarding the salaries, salary schedules, or compensation paid in the form of fringe benefits, of a local agency executive, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 3511.1. However, this subdivision does not apply to a local agency calling a special meeting to discuss the local agency's budget.

(c) For purposes of subdivision (a), the requirement that the agenda be posted on the local agency's Internet Web site, if the local agency has one, shall only apply to a legislative body that meets either of the following standards:

(1) A legislative body as that term is defined by subdivision (a) of Section 54952.

(2) A legislative body as that term is defined by subdivision (b) of Section 54952, if the members of the legislative body are compensated for their appearance, and if one or more of the members of the legislative body are also members of a legislative body as that term is defined by subdivision (a) of Section 54952.

SEC. 10. The Legislature finds and declares that the fiscal integrity and stability of local governmental agencies in this state, including charter cities and charter counties, have a direct impact on the long-term well-being of all the residents of this state. The likelihood of businesses locating to or staying in the state is affected by the perception of a functioning, transparent, and practical governmental structure in the local governmental bodies in California. Therefore, the Legislature finds and declares that to ensure the statewide integrity of local government, the provisions of this act are an issue of statewide concern. Therefore, this act shall apply to all counties and cities, including charter counties, charter cities, and charter cities and counties.

SEC. 11. The provisions of this act are severable. If any provision of this act or its application is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

SEC. 12. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.